



2013 Public Policy Platform

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council will:

- ❖ *Promote policies, programs and laws that support the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in all facets of community life.*
- ❖ *Advocate to preserve and expand funding to support essential community supports, early intervention and education services for children and adults with developmental disabilities and their families.*
- ❖ *Support innovation that improves services and supports and helps people with developmental disabilities exercise self-determination and lead productive, personally fulfilling lives.*
- ❖ *Advocate for people with developmental disabilities to enjoy the same rights afforded other citizens.*

Early Intervention & Education

Advocate for interagency collaboration that results in a more integrated system of early care and education for all children, including those with developmental disabilities, and closes the school readiness gap.

Advocate for a year-round early intervention service system that is adequately funded and supports children with their non-disabled peers.

Promote and support legislation, regulations, policies, practices, and funding that result in more students with disabilities educated in the least restrictive environment, as required by state and federal law.

Through collaboration with the Maryland State Department of Education, institutions of higher education and other stakeholders, promote and support strategies that better prepare general education teachers to teach students with disabilities in general education classrooms.

Child Care & Out of School Time Activities

Advocate for policies, regulations, programs, and training that result in families of children with developmental disabilities having access to quality, affordable child care that includes children with and without disabilities together.

Expanded and Improved Community Services

Advocate for increased funding to reduce the Developmental Disabilities Administration's waiting list for community supports and services. Currently over 7300 people are waiting.

Support the Governor's Transitioning Youth Initiative and advocate for DDA funding to serve all "transitioning youth" -- youth with developmental disabilities exiting the school system who need day or employment support.

Advocate for policies and provider rates necessary to ensure the provision of individualized, person centered supports and competitive wages for direct support staff.

Promote policies and practices that support people with developmental disabilities to maximize the control they have over their own lives.

Advocate for and support improvements to the Developmental Disabilities Administration's Low Intensity Support Services and Family Support Services programs to maximize impact and quality.

Advocate for additional funding for the Autism Waiver to reduce the number of children on the registry waiting for services. There are currently 3700 children and their families on the registry.

Reducing and Eliminating Reliance on Institutions

Support efforts to move residents in Maryland's two remaining institutions (State Residential Centers) to the community, advocate for the closure of SRCs so Maryland can join other states that are institution-free, and support expansion of high quality community options.

Advocate for all people with developmental disabilities involved in the criminal justice system to be supported in the least restricted/most integrated setting with state-of-the-art services. Oppose funding to expand facility-based services.

Promote inclusive practices. Ensure that policymakers have accurate information, including the cost of institutional and community services, reports and research about where people's needs can most appropriately be met, and evidence-based practices.

Empowerment, Leadership & Advocacy

Support people with developmental disabilities to advocate for themselves and others, develop leadership skills, exercise choice and control over their lives, and play a meaningful role in the development of public policies and community services that affect them.

Support and promote the development of self-advocacy skills by youth with developmental disabilities so they can effectively engage in decisions affecting their lives and become effective advocates and future leaders.

Support parents of people with developmental disabilities to advocate for their family's needs and the needs of others, develop leadership skills, and play a meaningful role in the development of public policies that affect them.

Civil Rights

Support and advocate for laws that ensure the rights of people with developmental disabilities are not violated and are consistent with the rights afforded all other Marylanders.

Healthcare

As Maryland implements health care reform, ensure that state health care policies, programs and services provide people with developmental disabilities fair and equal access to affordable health care treatment, information and options.

Promote the development of affordable dental services for people with developmental disabilities, many of whom lack access to this basic health service.

Employment

Advocate for policies and services that support people with developmental disabilities to have jobs they desire in the community working alongside their non-disabled coworkers, living wages with benefits, and opportunities for career advancement. Support implementation of Maryland's Employment First policy so that paid employment is the first service option considered for all people with developmental disabilities.

Promote and support the development of a system to measure employment outcomes.

Promote policies and practices that improve what schools do to help students with developmental disabilities successfully transition from school to work.

Post-Secondary Education

Support statewide strategic planning that leads to increased access to higher education by adults with developmental disabilities and improved outcomes.

Housing

Advocate for, and support, policies and programs that result in more rental housing options that are accessible and affordable to people with developmental disabilities who have low incomes. This includes, but is not limited to, the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program, rental vouchers and utilizing additional federal funding opportunities.

Transportation

Advocate for an increase in the availability of reliable, affordable, and accessible transportation for people with developmental disabilities and their families.

Diversity

Promote equal access to information and community resources for people with developmental disabilities from underserved ethnic and cultural groups.

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council is a public policy organization established through the federal Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act. The MD DD Council advocates and supports the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in all facets of community life. This role includes informing policymakers about the impact of legislation and budget decisions on people with developmental disabilities and their families.

Issues are listed in random order. This document is available in alternate formats.

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